

The Internet is a valuable resource for me for research of all kinds, an access point to the global market, and networking with people from both near and far-flung places. It started as a secure network between educational institutions, commerce and the Department of Defense. As it grew and became more sophisticated, it became an important social and commercial venue, one that I utilize every single day.

I now use it for many aspects of life and work. I recently graduated from college. As a student the Internet was an important research tool. I still use the Internet for research, and still depend upon it for information that helps make sense of what I hear and see on the news (of which I am with Benjamin Franklin in believing none of what I hear and little of what I see.) The Internet under the control of any commercial entity or discrete group of such entities would be useless, without value. Net censorship, or commercial control thereof, is against the spirit of the Constitution of the United States of America.

While it is important to try to keep people safe from con artists and children safe from predators, those efforts need to happen on the user side. Software is available to protect kids, and parental vigilance is more effective than any effort to stop misuses on the supply side ever could be. And those who are determined to be conned will continue to be so. Handing control over to commercial entities won't stop these abuses on the Internet, but even if they could and the con men couldn't reach them through their computers then they would still do so through the mail, by phone, and by knocking on doors. It has always been thus.

The value of the Internet as a means for individuals to self-publish and participate in the larger discussion that, until the advent of public access to the World Wide Web was the purview of a few commercial entities, is incalculable - as would be the harm in allowing control of our access to all of this to again fall into the hands of a few interested parties. In fact, I doubt that the people of America would stand for such restriction. I am guessing that it may be easy for the people who run regulatory agencies such as the FCC to view the public as a large malleable flock of sheep, but the FCC must resist such a view or risk being found redundant by the people who are, in fact, not sheep.

FaceBook and Google do not define the Internet, nor do Internet Service Providers, or any of the many commercial e-commerce sites that exist. The Internet was designed to be a decentralized repository and conduit for information, both redundant and wide-spread, and therefore resistant to attack at any point source. It has also become a vehicle for free speech and assembly, and as such is protected by our Constitution. It is by definition inherently free of regulation and control by any one entity. It must remain so. To give control of any part of this remarkable phenomenon to any commercial entity or interest or discrete group thereof would, I believe, be antithetical to our very rights of free speech and assembly.

The FCC is charged with regulating the commercial entities who effect mass communications, not

with giving them the store. No individual entities should ever have power or control over the Internet. It is too important as a means of information and communication, a really new way of communicating that did not exist until the 1960s, and which has grown into a worldwide network for communication and commerce that is uniquely accessible by individuals. New technologies like radio and television quickly became the captive mouthpieces of commercial interests, and even though there are individual public stations and other points of access by the public to these broadcast media, these points of access are few and far between, and in some cases, prohibitively expensive to maintain. These media are, essentially, controlled by commercial entities. The Internet, despite all of its commercial content, has never been controlled by any one entity or group of entities. In it, we the people!

finally have an access point to broadcast our own ideas, thoughts, artistic expressions, and even small business and commercial efforts, without regard to any larger entities and for reasonable cost. To allow this point of access to be controlled by larger commercial entities would be an act of treason. As Americans, we have the right to free and unfettered access to any information we seek. We don't burn books here, we don't restrict an individual's right to free speech, and we don't prevent people from assembling for any reason. The Internet has become our means to free speech and assembly.

To give control of the Internet to commercial entities would be a kind of McCarthyism. In the 1950s, you may recall that American citizens were subjected to myriad breaches of their rights by the actions of Joseph McCarthy, a senator from Wisconsin. It's well known that artists, teachers, lawyers and many others were blackballed from entire areas of expression and employment, simply because of their thoughts and ideas. Other ordinary citizens were accused of harboring "un-American" thoughts and ideas and investigated. Thousands had and their lives and careers destroyed, and hundreds were even imprisoned.

What is less well-known is that McCarthy had ties to commercial concerns, and acted in many instances for commercial interests and against the American people. One example of this was his fight to end price controls too soon after the second world war. In fact he was called "The Pepsi-Cola Kid" because of how the soda company rewarded him monetarily for helping them make more profits. He acted directly counter to the interests of American workers when he supported the Taft-Hartley act, making it more difficult for working people to organize and defend their own interests against their employers.

The FCC should not become the next Joseph McCarthy. It must not fetter what has become the one means of many Americans to exercise their rights. It must not close this one remaining access point, or allow commercial entities control over it. Free speech and free assembly are definitely counter to the interests of some commercial entities, especially large communications firms, and we must be allowed to have this power against them. In fact people have gotten used to having this power, and

the many additional choices that come with it. If the FCC takes this power from the people, it will show itself to have a conflict of interest, and to be acting against those it is supposed to protect.

The FCC must have the power to protect consumer access to the most important communications medium of our time. The FCC must stand with me and my compatriots and keep the Internet in the hands of the people who use it every day. Please reclassify broadband as a "telecommunications service" and keep the Internet open and free of corporate gatekeepers.